

(c) As a follow up of the directions of the Supreme Court, all the State/UT Governments have been sent detailed guidelines on 26th December 1996 indicating the manner in which the directions of Supreme Court could be given effect to. A conference of States/UTs Labour Ministers was also convened on 22.1.97 to formulate an action plan for the implementation of the directions of Supreme Court on withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children. Based on these deliberations guidelines along with model child labour survey form for carrying out survey as per the directions of the Supreme Court have been sent to the State Governments/UTs. Guidelines also provide for simultaneous action for recovery of the compensation from offending employers.

Multi-purpose Counters in Post Offices

*269. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the activities undertaken by multi-purpose counters in Post Offices;

(b) the number of multi-purpose counters opened in post offices in the country and particularly in Gujarat during the last two years;

(c) whether the Government propose to set up more multi purpose counters during 1997; and

(d) if so, the locations thereof State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) The PC based multipurpose counter machines in post office provide a range of counter services, both domestic and international, on a "single window" principle.

The services provided through the counter machines are:

Booking of :

(i) Speed Post Articles.

(ii) Registered Articles.

(iii) Parcels.

(iv) Money Orders.

(v) Value payable articles - letters and parcels.

- Acceptance of premia for Postal Life Insurance.

- Issue of Unclassified receipts.

- Receipt for collection of telephone revenue.

The Department has installed 1654 computer based counter machines in the country during the years 1994-95

and 1995-96 and out of these 86 counter machines have been installed in Gujarat.

The programme of computerising counter services with multi purpose counter machines is being continued in the Department's Annual Plan 1996-97 and it is proposed to be continued in the Annual Plan 1997-98 also. The number of multi purpose counter machines planned for installation in 1996-97 is 1500 and in 1997-98 is 1000.

Joint Plant Committee

*270. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ministry has constituted and expert group to evaluate the present constitution and role and functions of Joint Plant Committee;

(b) if so, whether the group has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details of suggestions made;

(d) whether the Government propose to make Iron and Steel Joint Plant Panel broad-based; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Ministry of Steel had constituted a Committee on 10.1.1996 under the Chairmanship of Shri Moosa Raza, Former Secretary, Ministry of Steel to go into the question of redefining the organization and functions of the joint Plant Committee (JPC) in the liberalised economic scenario. The Committee has presented its report to the Government on 26.2.1997.

(c) to (e) The major recommendations of the Committee include broad basing of the JPC by including a representative each of the iron and steel plants both in the public and private sector which have a minimum installed capacity of 0.5 million tonnes per annum; co-opting five members at a time in JPC out of the various associations of iron and steel with each of the member association being represented by one member and including representatives from the Ministries of Railways, Surface Transport, Coal and Steel in the JPC.

As regards the functions of the JPC, the Committee recommends that the JPC should be a body to make suitable recommendation to the Government on matters relating to growth and development of steel industry; monitor, evaluate and recommend remedial measures to alleviate infrastructure bottlenecks coming in the way of development of iron and steel, identify areas of fiscal and other policies of different State Government affecting the industry and to make appropriate recommendations thereon; suggest market development strategies; act as an agency for collecting, collating and analysing the data